

Jesus' Boldness and Humility Force Us to Choose- Crown Him or Kill Him

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 March 2026

Preacher: Rob Buttermore

[0 : 00] Good morning, church. Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 21.

! Then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied in a colt with her.

Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord needs them, and he will send them at once. This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you.

Humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden. The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them.

Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

[1 : 24] And when we entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, Who is this? And the crowd said, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee. This is the word of the Lord.

Have you ever dealt with conflicting sources of authority in your life? Right? Maybe you're a kid, and as you grow older, you find yourself becoming more and more independent. Yet, still at the same time, you're under your parents.

Right? You're a subject of them, and you're under their rules. At work, right? This is an example for me. Right? I have a supervisor. I kind of have this unofficial supervisor. I also have a manager who gives me tasks, and sometimes my director talks to me.

Right? And they give me some extra jobs. These situations, they're uncomfortable. Right? Especially when multiple people are trying to take on a role that only one person should have in your life.

This morning, we're going to hear about how Jesus' boldness and humility force us to make a choice between competing authorities as we walk through Matthew 21, 1 through 11 that Kyle just read.

[2 : 26] Let me pray, and then we'll dig in. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, your word is good. You are trustworthy. So as we dig in, Lord, let me speak with all boldness, but also humility, knowing that this is not my message but yours, knowing that this message is for me also, as it is for all your saints.

God, you are good in showing yourself to us. You are good in coming into Jerusalem, taking your place on the throne, taking your place on the cross.

Those are good things. And, Father, we thank you for it. So as we dig in today, would you be with us, and may your spirit be speaking. I pray this in your name. Amen. All right.

As you read through the first four books of the New Testament, right, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Gospels, we clearly see Jesus as Lord of all, right? He's commanded the wind and the waves.

He shows healing over the body. He shows the ability to feed the masses. Go to the next slide. Right?

[3 : 41] And he even brings life where there was death. It's amazing to see both his lordship and his care for his people. Up until Matthew 21, Jesus does much of his ministry in this somewhat secrecy.

Right? There are times he performs miracles, and then he asks people to keep this messianic secret, like, keep it down. There are times he clearly could have taken advantage, right, of the situation.

He could have drawn in larger crowds, growing his following more and more. But he declines to do this over and over. So, while doing much of this secret ministry, at the same time, he never shies away from being bold and humble at the same time.

Right? Here's some examples. He goes into the temple, and he cleans it out. People are doing money exchanging. They're doing merchants. He says, this is a house of prayer. He pronounces woes to the Pharisees and the scribes for blocking access to God's kingdom.

He says, get out of the way. People are coming to me. Right? He boldly heals on the Sabbath. Even after being warned, do not do this. He still does it.

[4 : 47] Right? And the Pharisees and scribes accuse him of blasphemy. He says, before Abraham was, I am. These are bold statements that shocked people. But at the same time, we see these examples of his humility.

Right? We see his baptism. In his baptism, he submits to John the Baptist. He associates himself with sinners, even though he was sinless. Right? In his desert temptations, he shows humility.

How? Right? Not by using his own power. Not by looking for his own benefit. But he anchors himself with the word. And he anchors himself in his father. His ministry to the outcasts.

Right? The tax collectors. The prostitutes. He rejects the normal social boundaries. And then foot washing. Right? This is a perfect example. He is their leader. He is clearly Lord of all.

He says, I am a bold leader who serves you in humility. Rather than demanding people to serve him. Right? Jesus' ministry was marked by certain periods of secrecy.

[5 : 47] He wanted to keep things small. But here in Matthew 20 and 21, we have a pivot going on. There's a change about. The scene just before our passage today in Matthew 21.

Right? Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. And two men cry out to him for healing. They're blind. One of the interesting parts of this story is that as the men are calling on Jesus to heal them, he says, or they say, Lord, have mercy on us, son of David.

For the kids. Every time I say the word son of David, I want you guys to yell out king. Son of David king. Ready? Son of David. King.

All right. Right? And when they say this, Jesus heals them. Something that could be easily missed. Right? In this passage is that when they're asking for mercy, they call him son of David.

There you go. Right? This is the first time it's been allowed to be said in public. Compare this to a very similar scene in Matthew 9. Matthew 9, 27 through 30 says, And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, Have mercy on us, son of David.

[6 : 59] Thank you. When he entered the house, the blind men came to him. And Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? And they said to him, Yes, Lord.

Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith, let it be done to you. And their eyes were opened. This last sentence, And Jesus sternly warned them, See that no one knows about it. He's trying to keep it down. And then in Matthew 20, just before this, we see a difference. A lot of this is the same. Lord, have mercy on us, son of David. The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent.

But they cried out more, Lord, have mercy on us, son of David. And stopping, Jesus called them and said, What do you want me to do for you?

And they said, Lord, let our eyes be opened. And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight, and they followed him. Do you see the difference? Jesus is no longer keeping this a secret.

[8 : 00] So we have to ask, What is the meaning, son of David, to these people? Why are the blind men saying this?

Why is it causing such a stir to those every time it's said? What we can tell from the text is that everybody in chapter 20 knew what this meant. Right? If we go back to the Old Testament, 2 Samuel 7, 12 through 16, God declares he will be the father of David's descendant, and that David's house and kingdom will endure forever.

Right? So many of the Psalms put on display the foreverness of David's line on the throne. Psalms 89, 110, 132.

And even after Israel is divided into two kingdoms, this line of David is what shows that there is a coming king. Other places, like Isaiah 11, 10, Jeremiah 23, 5, Jeremiah 33, 15, they give this Jewish crowd great expectation of one that is to come.

Right? And now for the first time, somebody cries out to him, Oh, ultimate king. Oh, final king of the world. And how does Jesus respond? He says, Yes. He answers.

[9 : 20] That's me. And everybody gasps at his boldness. Palm Sunday, right? And all of Holy Week tells us the king who has been on the move is now rapidly accelerating his takeover.

His rule and reign of what is rightly his. But at the same time, he never stops this mastery of being bold and humble at the same time. With that, we're going to start to walk through today's text.

Right? There's two major sections here in Matthew 21, 1 through 11. The first is when the king finds his war horse for battle. Right? That's verses 1 through 7. And then there's the king rides into battle in Matthew 21, 8 through 11.

All four gospels have the triumphal entry. Right? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they all show it. But it's very cool. If you guys have time this afternoon, you'll notice if you read through each one of those, each gospel author writes about Jesus' entry in a different way.

They're putting emphasis on something different. Matthew focuses on prophecy, fulfillment, and messianic authority. That's what we're going to go through today. Right? Mark writes this simple story that anyone can follow, and he compels the reader to follow along, to believe.

[10 : 33] Luke's a historian writing for the cultured Greek readers. Right? And John's focus is Jesus as the eternal son of God. This morning, we're only going to focus on the Matthew one, but would highly recommend a read through that this afternoon.

So let's go through verse one. Right? This is setting the stage. This is giving us a scene to set our minds on. You can see Jesus and his disciples are going from the outskirts of Jerusalem, and they're coming closer and closer to the city.

As he's going along the way, right, he's caring for his disciples by preparing them for what is to come. Right? This is for the benefit in the moment, but also giving the disciple clear expectations for Holy Week.

That's ahead of them. As he's moving closer and closer to Jerusalem, he's leading them in that. Verse two begins with his next teaching point in preparation with the disciples.

He speaks to them. Right? He says to them, look what's up ahead. There's a village there. Go there as we remain back. Find a donkey with its colt, right, or a kiddo donkey.

[11 : 39] After you find it, untie it and bring it back to me. That is a bold request for his disciples. Right? If that was me, you can only imagine my look at the other disciple. You want me to do what? You want me to go steal a donkey from the village up ahead?

Right? But verse three tells us something different. Jesus anticipates this response, and he assures them, listen, if anyone says anything about what you're doing, speak as an ambassador.

Speak with my authority given to you. Tell them the Lord needs them, and he will send them at once. What do the disciples need to go and do this seemingly random task?

They need boldness. And what does Jesus provide for them? He provides boldness. He says, you are my ambassadors. Act on my behalf. The disciples, right, they've been convinced that he's the Christ, the coming Messiah to fulfill so many of the prophecies of the Old Testament.

They have seen his ministry for years, and they are ready to obey. As an aside, think about the car that you drive, right? The car that you drive communicates something about you.

[12 : 43] For some, it says, hey, this is what I can afford to get from point A to point B. For others, it says, I live in New England, right? This is what I need for safety in the winter. And for others, it says, this is the only kind of car that will fit my family, right?

Whatever you drive, if you make a statement, if you want to make a statement, right, if you want to come into town and say, hey, a big deal is coming. You don't go out and get a 95 Toyota Tercel, right?

You don't drive that into town. Think about this. Jesus as Lord has rule and reign over all things. We just went through Genesis 3 or Genesis 1, the creation.

In that, he speaks everything into creation. His power. He's able to do anything. But yet, what does he do here? He chooses to borrow a donkey, not even his own, and ride it into town.

And what is he announcing? He's announcing there's a big deal here. I'm about to go take over, right? Either he's not passing Marketing 101 here or he's doing something paradoxical, something

that might be confusing but will make sense.

[13:52] And then in verse 4, Matthew makes it clear to us here, right? This whole taking of the donkey and the colt, it is not just a random act that he's trying to confuse the disciples with, right? He's not just trying to confuse the crowds that are watching.

Matthew points our gaze backwards. He says that he's trying to fulfill what the prophets have said, assuring us that this act has both meaning and purpose.

And then in verse 5, he lays out which prophets he's talking about. Matthew leaves no doubt for us, right? He combines bits of both Zechariah 9.9 and Isaiah 62.11.

Can we roll forward just a little bit? A couple, yeah, keep going. Keep going. Keep going. Sorry, I got a little behind here.

There we go. Right? Matthew 21.5 says, He's borrowing here from Zechariah 9.9 and Isaiah 62.11.

[14:56] Zechariah 9.9 says, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout out, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you. Righteous and having salvation is he.

Humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey. You see the overlap there. This is amazing. This is amazing. Why? Why? Before, he was letting the other people call him son of David.

Right? Somebody else was calling him king. But now, he's calling himself king by riding in on a donkey. He's boldly declaring out loud about himself. He's saying, people, rejoice.

I am here. I am the king from Zechariah 9.9. I cannot be stopped. I am righteous and I am bringing salvation to my people. And aside on this, the context of Zechariah 9.9 is amazing.

Right? They're 20 years post-exile. Right? All the enthusiasm they got when they got their land back, they started rebuilding the temple, that's starting to wane and fall away. Right? There was the smallest proof of this kind of transformation that started to happen.

[16:09] Right? There was this external Jewish power that was growing in the Old Testament. And this is starting to fade. There was this moral reformation happening with all the Jewish people. And this was starting to fade.

It would have been easier for the people to say to themselves, this is a day of small things in which God is not with his people. Right? Many of the Jews believed that strict adherence to their faith, it no longer served any purpose.

Pragmatically, it made sense for them to pursue the best life possible despite their present difficulties. And in this prophecy of a coming king, right, the new ruler that's coming to Jerusalem in Zechariah, he's a ruler who's not going to be like those existing rulers.

He will be righteous and dripping with humility, bringing salvation. The shepherds in Zechariah's times, they were taking advantage of the flock. Right? They were feeding themselves at the expense of the flock.

This good shepherd now that is coming will take care of the flock and provide for them at his own expense. The second passage quoting here in verse 5 is Isaiah 62.

[17:18] Right? The full quote is, Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth, say to the daughter of Zion, your salvation comes. Behold, his reward is with him and his recompense before him.

The final portion of Isaiah, right, it's all about times and occasions until the end. And it's all for those who are holding fast to God's covenant love. God is preparing all those who are his people for his promised salvation by giving them promises and hope and encouragement.

Right? This is where keep justice and do righteousness comes from. So when Matthew invokes this here, what is he saying? He says, Hey, some of those times that I predicted in the future, some of them are no longer future things.

Some of them are happening right now. It is amazing to witness the fulfillment of prophecy centuries earlier taking place right in front of their eyes. And as Jesus looks at Jerusalem before him, he's announcing with great boldness, right?

While riding on a humble donkey, I have come. People of God, I am here. I am bringing salvation. You are my reward.

[18:29] You are with me. It is quite a powerful picture here put together with this quote from the Old Testament. Right? And Matthew writes his gospel years later after this event happened.

Right? After Jesus' death on the cross. But you can imagine Matthew's joy as he's writing this. How excited he must be to see Jesus making these connections from the Old Testament. Right?

As Jesus is serving his father, as he's serving to bring a people who don't deserve salvation, as he's bringing them salvation, he wasn't, he was connecting the dots of the Old Testament.

Not just as a party trick, right? But he's encouraging his people. Right? They've been through hundreds of dry, dry years. But he says, I am a promise keeper God.

After this quotation from Zechariah and Isaiah in verse 5, we move on to verse 6. And we see what can only be described as beautiful obedience. The disciples went out and they did as Jesus directed them.

[19 : 29] What a simple sentence. It shows their response to Jesus' command. A command from their righteous authority and simple obedience from a faithful servant. Right?

For these disciples in the moment, there's no competition going on for their intellect. There's no competition going on for their heart. Right? Isn't that the way it's supposed to be? And finally, to wrap it up in verse 7 here, we see this story unfold as two disciples return to Jesus after completing their task.

And what do they do? They lay their cloaks, their outer garments, on the donkey and Jesus sits on them. This moment of fulfillment is happening right before their eyes. The sense of anticipation and hope in this scene, the feeling we have when somebody comes through on a promise they've made to us, it's only just a hint of what Jesus' followers felt here.

Something new was happening and the message was clear. He is here. Everything will be alright. Our second section, verse 8, right?

It now shifts our focus. We were Jesus and his disciples. Now we're Jesus, his disciples and the crowds. And the crowds grow and grow as we walk through this. The announcement of the king is here.

[20 : 42] It raises the stakes, right? And for most of the crowd, they follow disciples' lead. What do they do? They lay their cloaks on the road for Jesus. Others cut branches and spread them before him.

So we have to ask, is this an act of respect? Is something else going on here? We go right to verse 9. It gives us a clear picture. What happened materially is now happening verbally. Right?

The crowds of the people on the path in front of Jesus are following him and they're shouting, Hosanna to the son of David. Thank you. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. The people see this walking, paradoxical word picture right in front of them. Right? Like a champion warrior returning home from battle, celebrating victory.

But at the same time, he's riding on this small, simple donkey. They are praising and rejoicing that he's home. And they seem to be blissfully ignoring the fact of what he's riding on.

[21 : 43] My take on this, right, from the text, is that as they're yelling, Hosanna, or in English, oh, save us. And then the title, Son of David. A couple.

It's kind of cheating because I highlighted it on here. But you guys don't have that. So they choose not to highlight any of the humility aspects of riding in on a donkey. Right? This is more than likely because the Jews were expecting something else.

Right? They wanted to be released from Roman rule. Right? They've been under it for so many years. They've had different rebel rousers come through, promise independence for the Jews, and it has not come.

But they see Jesus coming and they say, we're finally going to be free from the Romans. They're willing to ignore the fact that he's riding on a donkey, fulfilling Zechariah 9.9 and Isaiah 62.11.

Right? They're choosing to see him as this military or political ruler and leader that will lead them to dependence. And then verse 10 goes on to tell us that Jesus makes his way into the city.

[22 : 46] He's seen by more and more people. And the text says the whole city begins to be stirred up. And everyone starts asking, who is this?

What a key, critical question. Who is this man walking into Jerusalem stirring up the whole city? The Romans? They don't allow things like this to happen in the city.

They want order and peace and they'll use violence to stop it. Who is this man doing this? Everyone there was forced to make a choice by Jesus' action of walking into the city.

What do I mean by that? Believe that this is the promised, bold, and humble king to bring salvation or you must choose to see him as an enemy.

The Romans were right. They wanted to squash him because they wanted peace in the short term. So they saw Jesus as the enemy. By Jesus coming into Jerusalem announcing he's the king, he's

confronting all other authorities and he puts them right in their place.

[23 : 55] I am the king. The confrontational nature of this entrance into Jerusalem, right, it brings what he's been saying his whole life and it's summed up by Reynolds Price.

Jesus is saying, crown me or kill me. There's nothing in the middle. And then we finish with verse 11. Here we see the crowds answer that question.

Who is he? And what's their response in verse 11? They call him he's a prophet. They know his name is Jesus and they know he's from Nazareth of Galilee. But what are they missing?

They're missing the title king, son of David. There we go. To them he's a prophet, right, he's just another one coming into Jerusalem.

They've seen this before. Little do they know, they have so much right about him, right? They have accurate information but the core they're missing. By calling him a prophet, they're missing the main point.

[24 : 55] What they're witnessing is the king riding into battle, a battle which will change the world, right? It won't be until a week later when they see that the boldest and the most humblest act ever by the one true king on the cross.

Come back next week for the rest of that story. But with that, right, let's finish with some application from the text here. Back at the beginning, we see this, oh goodness, I have a cold, I swear.

Back at the beginning, we see the disciples' simple obedience to the simple command they were given, right, to go and retrieve the donkey. This is an example for us who know Christ as king.

When the king asks you to obey, there should be no delay, no twisting out of a faithful response, right? Our lives as Christians should be like the common phrase that we use at our house.

Obedience is all the way, it's right away, and it's with a happy heart, right? Think about those simple commands we've been given. Love the Lord with your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

[26 : 19] love one another just as Jesus has loved you. How about this one? Pray and love your enemies. Pray for and love your enemies.

Live out the great commission and make disciples of all nations. And for those who don't know Christ here, right, the first step of simple obedience is to have him as king in your life first.

Other than that, you're going to fight for obedience, it's going to be endless wrestling with competing authorities for the rest of your life. He will not be competed with. You might be feeling this fight already, right?

Put the king on his throne. I would love to talk with you more about what that means after service, right? Please come up and ask any questions. Put the king on his rightful throne.

The next application is here, right, we should expect the upside-down kingdom of Jesus like we see in Matthew 21, 1 through 11 here, right?

[27 : 24] This kingdom where ascending comes through descent, where power emerges from service, where the last become first, where wealth flows from generosity, where the marginalized hold so much worth, where strength arises from weakness, and life springs from death.

This is not just a philosophy to follow. What this shows is the profound reorientation towards what God values and not what the world values.

And the cross is the perfect picture of this, right? The sinless God allowed himself captivity. Why? So the guilty could experience deliverance.

the creator made the one who never sinned to become sin itself, enabling those who sin to receive righteousness. The innocent one surrendered himself for the guilty so that they could be freed.

This is the compelling story we need to be telling ourselves, right, as we walk through our lives. This is the compelling story we need to tell others. And finally, this is the compelling story we need to live out, right, no matter what context you're in.

[28 : 40] This is a call in our lives. Second to last, praise and worship Jesus when you see him.

What we saw with the spreading of cloaks in the ground, the yelling about, the yelling out of Hosanna in the highest, these are good things, right?

It's all right and good to do, but you need to answer the question correctly when you're asked, who is he? when he's on the throne doing extravagant things like this to show him and the world his worth, that's exactly what we are called to do.

And then finally, we have to discuss this, right? Crown me or kill me, the challenge that Jesus gives everyone who hears the gospel. Is this drastic? Yes, right? Of course. But Jesus says, deal with it.

